



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

North Central Division

## **Great Lakes Levels Update No. 35 June 3, 1988**

The news in May was precipitation—the lack, thereof! Preliminary reports indicate that the Lakes Michigan-Huron basin may have set a record in May for the least amount of precipitation since record keeping began in 1900. Great Lakes-wide, it appears that last month was the fifth driest May since 1900. The Lake Superior basin received near average precipitation; Lakes Michigan-Huron about 60% below average; Lake Erie about 45% below average; and, Lake Ontario about 35% below average. The 30-day outlook from the National Weather Service for the month of June is indicating continued above average air temperatures and below average precipitation.

All of the Great Lakes usually rise from their winter lows in May. However, because of current dry conditions, Lakes Michigan-Huron levels held steady in May, Lakes St. Clair and Erie actually dropped slightly and Lakes Superior and Ontario rose somewhat in May. About one inch of the Lake Ontario rise was due to discretionary action on the part of the International Joint Commission's International St. Lawrence River Board of Control, which temporarily retained a small amount of Lake Ontario's plan outflow for a two-week period. For this month, Lake Superior is expected to continue its seasonal rise but the other lakes are expected to rise very little, if at all.

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**For Great Lakes basin technical assistance or information, please contact one of the following Corps of Engineers District Offices:**

*For New York, Penn. & Ohio:*

**Colonel Daniel R. Clark  
Cdr, Buffalo District  
1776 Niagara Street  
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199  
(716) 876-5454, Ext. 2201**

*For Mich., Minn. & Wisc.:*

**Colonel Robert F. Harris  
Cdr, Detroit District  
P.O. Box 1027  
Detroit, MI 48231-1027  
(313) 226-6440 or 6441**

*For Ill. & Indiana:*

**LTC Jess J. Franco Jr.  
Cdr, Chicago District  
219 S. Dearborn St.  
6th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604-1797  
(312) 353-6400**

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The *Help Yourself* brochure is available at the District Offices listed above or from this office: North Central Division; 536 South Clark Street; Chicago, Illinois, 60605-1592; telephone (312) 353-6364.

As an indication of how rapidly lake levels have turned around, I attended a public meeting in Clayton, New York on May 31 arranged by Congressman David O'B. Martin at which we heard concerns about recent low levels on Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River (as compared to the past several years) and the prospect for below-average levels. I have personally expressed these concerns to the International Joint Commission (IJC) and consideration is being given to additional discretionary retention of water on Lake Ontario if interests downstream are not adversely affected.

The IJC's Task Force Study Report (short-term measures) for alleviating fluctuations on the Great Lakes is complete. The Commission intends to forward, this month, an interim report to govern-

ments based on the Task Force Report. In April, the IJC-approved Plan of Study (long-term) for the Great Lakes Level Reference was released. A Phase I report in May 1989 will feature a comprehensive framework for the systematic evaluation of measures, a preliminary assessment of certain measures, and an outline for the initiatives of Phase II. The Phase II report in September 1991 will give the results of evaluating specific priority measures. Copies of the Plan of Study (POS) have been distributed to interested groups and libraries. Comments on the POS are welcome. In the United States write to: International Joint Commission; 2001 'S' Street, NW; 2nd floor; Washington, D.C. 20440; telephone (202) 673-6222.

**Theodore Vander Els**  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding